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Homestake Fire.

The greatest fire ever occurring in a gold mine in this country, and one of the greatest in the world has just been successfully overcome by the Homestake Mining company at Lead, says the Pioneer Times. For over two months the company struggled with this fire, and it was not until it had burned for 30 days that it was found necessary to turn into the mine all the available water and to flood the scores of underground workings. The most remarkable feature in connection with this event is that, although, for days, men were carried out of the mine unconscious from the effects of the deadly gases, though caves occurred, and red-hot rock was mined from the stopes in the hope of getting at the fire, and are hundreds of feet deep, yet among all the men who have so persistently and bravely fought the fire, there has not been a single fatality.

On the evening of March 25th the people were startled by the ringing of the fire bell and in a few moments the word had carried through Lead, Deadwood and even into the outside camps that the Homestake was on fire. The blaze started on the ninth floor of the 600-foot level and consequently was very near the 500-foot level. It was supposed to have ignited from the blasting out of some old timbers by the day shift just before they went off. The Homestake has always been considered an especially well prepared mine for all fire emergencies. It has ample water on all levels, pipe lines, hose, and all equipment for fighting fire; and yet from the very beginning, these flames were beyond control. The great difficulty was caused by the forming of the deadly carbon dioxide gas which made it impossible for the men to approach near the fire, and which overcame them by the dozens, so that they were carried out, either unconscious or raving in delirium. Still the fight in the dark went on. Fire helmets were secured and with the help of these, the little army of workers pushed somewhat nearer the blaze. Brattices were built, and following along one side with compressed air and water, the fighters made another attack upon the blaze. Steam was turned in; water was sent down through the open cut with the hope that it might reach the infected spot; tunnels were reopened and entrance to the burning stopes sought in this way. All was useless. On the morning of April 2, after a night of great danger, Superintendent Grier ordered all men out of the mine, and the fight was continued for a time through upper tunnels, by means of small streams of water through the open cut, underneath which the fire was supposed to be located, and by repeated efforts on the part of the fire brigade to reach the blaze, by the help of their helmets and the brattices.

On April 22nd, the order to flood went forth, the last resort, and everything, even the few mills which were still operating, were closed. The workings of the mine are 1,550 feet deep, and there are over a hundred miles of underground channels. The natural inflow of water into the mine filled it to the 1,100-foot level, and from there up, the work of filling was accomplished in an unexpectedly short time. The space to be filled amounted to 68,393,621 cubic feet, and required 507,000,000 gallons of water. In order to effect this flooding, water was turned in through the Ellison hoist, the open cut, and even the old Lincoln shaft was opened up for this purpose. By means of a flume, water was brought in through a tunnel at the north end, and a great part of White-wood creek was turned in through the Savage tunnel by a flume 3,200 feet long, 20 inches wide and 30 inches deep. This gave a volume of water equal to about 7,500 gallons a minute, and this in addition to the water the mine makes and the additional supply caused by heavy rains and snows, brought the flood to the highest possible point about 80 feet on the 300 level, by the 29th of May, only 37 days from the commencement. When this was accomplished there was no question but that the fire was out.

It is impossible at this date to estimate the actual loss to the company. The greatest item comes in the loss of product which can be reckoned very fairly. From April 3rd to April 22nd only 600 out of 1,000 stamps dropping and from April 22 to May 30 there was no output whatever. The average monthly bullion output of this company is about 400,000\$, and hence the bullion loss for this time approximates 943,163\$. There must be taken into consideration also, the fact that when the mills began work on May 29, only 440 stamps were dropping out of the 1,000. This means that the monthly product will be diminished by over one-half while this continues, and how long that will be, it is impossible to say. The loss in bullion may, however, be placed very conservatively at 1,000,000\$. The cost of flooding the mine was but little more than nominal, while the cost of unwatering will include the cost of labor and fuel for operating the skips.

The Year Without a Summer.

Apocryphal of the abnormally cold, wintry weather that has been prevailing all over the East and South, these extracts from the diary of a New Yorker kept during 1816 will be read with interest. That year was known for many years, as "the year without a summer."

June of 1816 was a month of ice and desolation. Corn was killed in August. Snow fell throughout that summer. Blazing fires and winter wraps were a necessity. All nature was clad in sable hue. Men and women became frightened and imagined that the heat of the sun had become exhausted. Ministers took the phenomenon for the text of their sermons, while fanatics seized the opportunity to form religious organizations.

January of 1816 was mild, so mild that people allowed their fires to go out. A severe cold snap came in February, but soon passed away. March had no unusually high temperature, but April was the advance guard of the strange freak in temperature. May was a bitter disappointment. Buds came out, but so did the frost, and in one night all vegetation lay in blackened waste. Corn was killed and the fields had to be made ready for another planting. Ice of the thickness of half an inch formed on Black creek. June, the month of roses, was that year a month of ice and desolation. The older inhabitants were surprised, as never before had the thermometer sunk so low in those latitudes in the last month of spring. Frost, ice and snow were common. Almost every green thing was killed and various kinds of fruit were nearly all destroyed. One day the snow fell to a depth of three inches.

July was accompanied by frost and ice and those who celebrated the Glorious Fourth not wisely but too well, found an abundance of ice handy for immediate use next morning. That month Indian corn was destroyed in all but the most favored localities.

In August the farmers were doomed to disappointment. The midsummer month was, if possible, more cheerless than the days that had already passed. Ice formed even thicker than it had the month before, and corn was so badly frozen that it was cut for fodder. Almost every green plant was frozen. What little corn ripened in the unexposed states was worth almost its weight in silver, and farmers were compelled to provide themselves with corn grown in 1815 for the seed they used in the spring planting of 1817. The seed cost 5¢ a bushel.

The last month of summer was ushered in bright and warm, and for two weeks the almost frozen people began to thaw out. It was the middle of the year, but just as the inhabitants began to appreciate it, old Boreas and old Jack Frost came along and whitened and hardened everything in their path. On the 16th ice formed a quarter of an inch thick and winter clothing that had been laid away for a few days was again brought out and wrapped around shivering humanity.

October kept up the reputation of its predecessors, and so did November, while December turned out to be the

mildest month of the year. Breadstuffs went up to an almost unheard-of price and it was impossible to obtain for table use any of the common vegetables, as they were needed for seed. Flour sold in the cities for 13¢ a barrel.

Soon to Start Work on New Railroad.

The San Diego Union says: Announcement has been made by John D. Spreckles that actual construction work on the San Diego and Arizona railroad at this end of the line will be commenced as soon as the rights of way have been secured. Mr. Spreckles further states that these rights of way are nearly all secured at the present time.

Mr. Spreckles said: "Mr. Clayton, Mr. Titus and myself just returned from a trip of inspection to Carris Canyon where work is now being done in preparation for the laying of the tracks. The sides of the canyon which is about 12 miles long, are of solid granite, and the work now being done consists of cutting benches in these walls, the track to be laid along these benches. This work will give the railroad company legal control of the pass, which is to be used as an entrance to the desert, and will facilitate the building of the tunnels. The line when completed will be one of the most picturesque in the entire country."

"All the controlling points in the canyon are also being graded, the surveying parties working eastward and westward from the canyon. Another surveying party is working below the boundary line between Mexico and the United States between Jacumba pass and Tia Juana."

"The company will begin actual construction work in San Diego as soon as the rights of way, including the property of the San Diego Cuayamaca and Eastern Railroad, are nearly all secured at the present time. The right of way through the property of the West Coast Lumber company is now being adjusted and the same is true in several other cases."

"Up to date the company has spent 1,250,000\$ in rights of way and in actual construction work."

Harvey House at Williams.

The contract has been let and the stakes set for the Williams' new Harvey house and depot. It is called "Fra Marcos" after Fra Marcos de Niza the discoverer of Arizona. Mr. Carl Leonard, the foremost reinforced concrete contractor of Los Angeles and vicinity was the successful bidder.

The new building will be of the same style as the Ash Fork house but a trifle smaller. It will contain thirty five guest rooms, fitted with hot and cold water and baths.

The building will be three hundred and seventy-five feet long forty five feet wide, and on the ground floor will have a baggage room, 30 by 45, ladies waiting room, 22 by 30, men's waiting room 22 by 30, curio room, 30 by 60, news room, 15 by 30, hotel lobby, office, etc., 30 by 60, dining room 30 by 30, lunch room 30 by 30, connected to the same will be a kitchen, pantry, store rooms, etc. of 30 by 90, laundry, 20 by 30, boiler room 15 by 14. The Harvey system has made no provision for electric lights but will depend on the local power company.

R. H. Benton, of Imperial valley, was in the city making arrangements for the shipment of twenty-one cars of cattle which he has purchased in the last few days in the Williams country and will be shipped from Kirkland to Imperial valley. Range cattle are selling at 15¢ to 16¢ for yearlings, 18¢ for two-year-olds and about 20¢ to 21¢ for three-year-olds. Mr. Benton is traveling over the country looking for cattle and he says that the stock in Arizona and New Mexico are thin at present, as there is a scarcity of water, and rain is much needed. "Everything in Imperial valley is prospering and there are no fears entertained of another break along the river. The river is receding at present, though it was at one time nearly within a foot of the level that it reached last year. In a few days ten to twelve cars of cantaloupes will be shipped out of the Imperial valley. It is estimated that there will be a total of 500 earloads as against 352 last year.—Republican.

Famous Mine Suit Settled.

Through a ruling handed down recently the commissioner of the general land office at Washington probably finally settled the most famous mining case in Colorado in late years. If it is not the most famous suit it has at least occupied the most space in the court records. The case is the suit of the Eli Mining and Land company against the Clipper Mining company, and involves title to 15 acres of land in the heart of the city of Leadville.

The property involved is estimated to be worth several millions of dollars, and the ruling of the commissioner favors the Clipper people. The commissioner affirms the decision of the Leadville register of the land office made a year ago as a whole, and reverses the receiver of that office.

The history of the case is quite complicated. It started away back in 1877, when the various strips of land around what is now Leadville were hurriedly taken up as placers for townsite purposes. The acreage here involved includes the Castle, Clipper, Congress and Capitol lode claims. They adjoin the famous Coronado mine on the north and there are 300 feet of rich veins blocked out in that property that built up against the end line of these claims.

These suits were begun in 1893 and tried in the district court of Lake county in 1898. The placers had been located in 1877, but in 1883 the government land officers declared that the land was not actually placer ground and that it had been obtained fraudulently. The contention lasted, however, until 1890, when a final decision was given against the placer holdings by the land office and the land was thrown open to entry. J. K. and S. C. Carlton and others located it 10 days after as lode claims. The property was put into the Clipper company.

In 1893 they were adverse in the district court by the Eli people and the case was tried in 1898 before Judge Rucker of Aspen. He held that the ground was placer ground, ignoring the decision of the department. The case was taken to the state supreme court on a writ of error and there the Rucker decision was affirmed. An appeal was taken to the supreme court of the United States, and that body held that it was not a case for the courts to decide, but for the land department to determine as a matter of fact the character of the land. There were a number of sensational features involved, including charges of falsifying and destroying records.

In time the dispute reached the secretary of the interior, and after a hearing he sent it back to the Leadville land office to determine whether the territory was placer land in character between the years 1831 and 1893, the rest of the time having been eliminated. The hearing on this occurred in May, 1903, and lasted 22 days, being one of the longest sessions of the kind on record. Experts on placer mining from the entire mountain region were called into the case as witnesses.

The result of this hearing was that the register of the land office held that it was not placer ground in the years specified and the receiver held that it was. The case was appealed to the land commissioner at Washington and hearing occurred in May of this year. The announcement of the result is that the commissioner upholds the ruling of the register of the Leadville office.

This is said to be a complete victory. There is an appeal to the secretary of the interior, but it is not thought this will be taken. There is no recourse in the courts, owing to the United States supreme court decision.

The litigation has been long and costly, as it is estimated that each side has spent not less than 200,000\$. The hearing last year before the Leadville office cost the Clipper people nearly 25,000\$. It is said that they will now go ahead and develop the mine, which will result in a great increase in the product of the camp. There are already two shafts on the property down 600 feet each and many crosscuts. It was in the hearing before the land office last year that Judge Ewers created some discussion

by testifying that he had given a decision in some features of the case while a stockholder in one of the companies.—Denver Mining Record.

Nevada-Utah Buys Manhattan Group.

The Salt Lake Tribune of June 12th states that the Nevada-Utah M. & S. Corporation has taken over the Imperial property situated in Beaver county, Utah, and the Manhattan Copper and Gold Mining Company's property, situated in the Ely and Highland Mining district, Pioche, Nevada. After purchasing this property the Nevada-Utah Company is left in a very substantial financial condition there being 1,000,000\$ in the treasury.

The acquisition of the Manhattan Copper and Gold Mining Company's property in this section will add very materially to the Nevada-Utah's mineral wealth in this section. Some of the very best mineral ground in this district is embraced in this transaction, composing the Telephone group of mines east of town and lying adjacent to the famous Alps mine, which has such a record as a producer of very high grade ore in the earlier days and that at a comparatively small depth. The Telephone mine has much the same formation as the Alps and from the development work undertaken, has given extremely satisfactory results. Also the Iron mines, situated in the Highland mining district near Stampede Gap is considered as being very desirable as a fluxing ore to say nothing of other mineral values. Thus the Nevada-Utah controls a large area of mineral ground upon which can be found an abundance of all characters of ores and of proven values.

The Nevada-Utah M. & S. corporation has about completed the installation of air compressors at the No. 1 and No. 5 shafts. After the compressors are completed, machine drills will be installed which will be of material benefit in the sinking of the shafts. Meanwhile work is progressing very satisfactory and the developing of the mines continue in a substantial manner.

A boarding house has been completed near the No. 3 shaft, which will be a great convenience to the men employed. Heretofore it has been all but impossible for the men to get accommodations in town. The company realizing this, and contemplating increasing the force, found it imperative that accommodations should be furnished with the result that the boarding house has been completed and bunk house will shortly be erected for sleeping accommodations. — Pioche Record.

In the mine of the California Gold & Copper Mining Co., at Vontzinger, of which A. H. Crams is superintendent, it is reliably reported that a body of "black copper" ore has been struck at the 340 foot level, sampling over 100\$ per ton in copper alone. Several shafts have been sunk on the veins which occur in a mineral zone fully 2,500 feet wide and good prospects are obtained in many places outside of the main working. Vontzinger is nine miles north of Goffs station on the Santa Fe railroad. A pipe line is being laid from near Hackberry Springs to the mine, a distance of six and one-half miles.—Searchlight Bulletin.

The twenty new stamps at the Quartette have been fully installed—the plates have arrived from the East and are in place, the engine is ready to start, and the two batteries await only the securing of more water to go into commission. It is thought that between the main shaft and that of the Drake the company has sufficient water, but at present the pumping facilities are inadequate. However, a large Cornish pump has been ordered for the Drake and upon its installation the full forty stamps will be set to work.—Searchlight Bulletin.

Ancient Rome

is now merely a memory of the past. Ballard's Snow Liniment is the family liniment of the twentieth century. A positive cure for Rheumatism, Burns, Cuts, Sprains, Neuralgia, etc. Mr. C. H. Runyon, Stanberry, Mo., writes: "I have used Snow Liniment for Rheumatism and all pain. I can't say enough in its praise." Sold by Watkins' Drugstore.